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ABSTRACT

The paper argues that a gap exists between institutional policy and practice as it pertains to the relative emphasis placed on teaching and research by university and college professors, and that the teaching-research debate will not be settled until administrators and trustees bring official policies and operating practice into line. Evidence is presented from national surveys showing that many, perhaps most, higher institution faculty do little or no research and publication. Faculty frustration is fostered when they accept the conventional view that all faculty are supposed to be scholars and publishers, but they know they are not. In view of the evidence, it should be possible to persuade institutions of higher education that they can improve teaching performance while simultaneously relieving the feelings of guilt and frustration experienced by many faculty because of the pressure to conduct research and to publish, by establishing policies that recognize that some faculty are productive researchers and some are not. Information is provided about how such a policy would be designed and implemented, with particular attention to the model offered by the land-grant universities and a specific example of such a policy in action, namely, the policy developed by the University of Texas of the Permian Basin, is presented. Finally, a brief analysis summarizes the reasons why universities should implement such policy changes regarding teaching and research requirements. Contains 7 references. (GLR)

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SHOULD EVERY PROFESSOR BE A RESEARCHER?

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SHOULD EVERY PROFESSOR BE A RESEARCHER?

V. R. Cardozier

One of the knottiest problems in higher education revolves around the question of faculty research and publication. It is not new and it is not likely to be settled soon nor easily but it should be addressed.

The need for research and publication in all fields of study is not the question. The question is: Who should do research and how much? Should every faculty member in higher education be expected or required to conduct research and publish? If so, how productive should each faculty member be? Should there be differences among types of institutions, among disciplines, by rank and in other respects?

Most faculty members do not do much, if any, research, notwithstanding the fact that almost all four-year colleges and universities in the U.S. profess to have a policy of requiring or expecting all faculty to conduct research and publish. Even among less affluent liberal arts colleges whose faculty must carry heavy teaching loads, most administrators assert that such a policy exists and one's publication record is important in tenure, promotion and compensation decisions.

The gap between institutional policy and practice is a chasm in most institutions and the teaching-research debate is not going to be settled until administrators and trustees bring official policies and operating practice into line.

Table I: Extent of Faculty Career Publishing by Type of Institution

Type of Institution*	None	Almost none	Light	Moderate	Heavy
		(percent)			
Research universities	7	12	9	32	40
Other doctoral granting universities	13	18	14	28	27
Comprehensive colleges & universities	25	24	16	18	17
Liberal Arts colleges	39	23	10	24	5

*According to the Carnegie Commission on Higher Education in A Classification of Institutions of Higher Education, 1973

Source: Everett Carll Ladd, Jr., "The Work Experience of American College Professors: Some Data and An Argument," Current Issues in Higher Education, American Association for Higher Education, Washington, D. C., D.C., 1979, p.8.

The Evidence

Most academics have known for a long time that many, perhaps most, faculty do little or no research and publication but documentation was meager. There is now a growing body of evidence for these speculations baed on several national surveys of faculty. One of the most recent is the 1984 survey of a sample of 5,000 faculty members by the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching.[1] The findings differed little from those of previous surveys of this kind.

One of the more analytical studies of faculty research and publication was conducted in 1977 by Professors E.C. Ladd and S. M. Lipset.[2] They surveyed faculty in a national sample of colleges and universities in which 4,383 faculty responded. The findings of their study were further supported by a Ladd-Lipset survey of 3,536 faculty respondents in a national sample of colleges and universities in 1975 plus a Carnegie Commission survey of 60,028 faculty in a national sample in 1969 and a Carnegie Council survey of 25, 262 respondents in a national sample of colleges and universities in 1975.[3]

Despite the fact that the 1977 Ladd-Lipset survey is now more than a decade old, no one has documented substantial change in faculty research and publication activity nor is there reason to believe that it has changed much since then. Their study is especially useful because it included certain analyses not found in other studies.

Ladd's report, based on his and Lipset's 1977 survey, classified faculty who had published only one to four articles in their careers as publishing "almost none;" those who had published five to twenty articles and one or two books as "moderate" publishers; and those who had published more than two books or more than twenty articles and one or a combination of the two as "heavy" publishers. Their findings are summarized in Table I. In their study, Ladd and Lipset included

two-year colleges which are excluded here because those institutions do not expect their faculty to be researchers and usually do not place high value on research and publication in their reward systems.

It seems likely that some of the books, especially among the light publishers, consisted of workbooks, laboratory manuals and other publications used in their teaching locally as well as books and chapters in books published by national publishing houses.

If one accepts the proposition that light publishing, as categorized by Ladd, does not constitute very productive research and publication, then we find that only in research and doctoral granting universities were most faculty productive, i.e., moderate to heavy publishers.

In comprehensive colleges and universities, which consist principally of master's degree granting institutions, just over one-third of the faculty were moderate to heavy publishers, and half had published nothing or almost nothing. Among liberal arts colleges, almost three out of four faculty had published little or nothing.

In view of the fact that research and doctoral granting universities account for a minority of faculty in four-year institutions, it is clear that most faculty in American colleges and universities are not researchers and publishers, despite institutional policies that say they are. Ladd points out that most faculty see themselves essentially as teachers. The Ladd-Lipset survey asked faculty about their teaching-research commitments. Ladd reported: "Only 7 percent indicate that their interests lie heavily in research. Another 23 percent express an interest in both teaching and research, but with a 'leaning' toward the latter. For the remaining 70 percent of academics, the personal preference is for teaching." He adds, "My personal observations, supported in part by our survey data, are that most faculty don't like research and don't do it very well, if at all." [4] Few informed academics would challenge this statement.

Ladd acknowledges that young faculty have not had time to be as productive as older faculty but he points out that the data showed that "the rate of current publication is somewhat higher for academics in their first two professorial decades (25 years of age to 44) than it is thereafter....."[5]

While it is speculative, there is some basis for suggesting that research productivity might be less among faculty who began college teaching and gained tenure between 1960 and 1970. College enrollment in the U.S. grew from 3.6 million in 1960 to 8.6 million in 1970.[6] As enrollment exploded, administrators struggled to find enough teachers to staff classes. Except in the most selective universities, few faculty failed to gain tenure during this period if they were passable teachers. Senior faculty and administrators bemoaned the lack of research productivity but, faced with the difficulty of finding a replacement, particularly if the incumbent held a doctorate, the tendency was to grant tenure and hope the individual would develop research interests.

Due to the severe shortage of available Ph.D. faculty, some of mediocre talent found positions in some of the better universities, received tenure and are now members of the senior faculty there, serving on committees to select new faculty. They now have the privilege of choosing from among a surplus of Ph.D. graduates, on average much brighter and more talented.

Former teachers colleges with exploding enrollments and with an eye to gaining accreditation sometimes chose a mediocre faculty member with a doctorate over a better teacher and scholar with only a master's degree. In too many cases, the doctorate holder had been rejected by better universities for lack of talent and scholarly promise. In many such institutions lack of research and publication had no influence on tenure decisions until after the 1960s. Today, some of them are large universities with sizeable graduate programs conducted by faculty, many of whose achievements in research and publication are modest to nonexistent.

This is not to indict all faculty who received the Ph.D. during the 1960s, many of whom are highly talented and have become productive researchers and publishers. But institutions that were virtually forced during the 1960s to appoint and award tenure to almost anyone holding a doctorate now find themselves in a position to be selective among new Ph.D. recipients.

Faculty Frustration

The frustration of faculty concerning research and publication is illustrated by a case cited by a professor of business administration who formerly taught at a large (16,000 students) comprehensive state university in the Midwest. The main topic of discussion among his colleagues when they met at the canteen for coffee was: "What can I write about?" The faculty members were in business administration but one could find the same concern, in varying degrees, among faculty in most other disciplines in that institution and, indeed, in dozens of similar institutions throughout the country. They were being pressed to do research and publish while, in fact, they were teachers and not very interested in research.

The institution began as a normal school, became a state teachers college, then a state college and during the enrollment explosion of the 1960s became a state university. Both the administration and faculty yearn for the institution to be a true university and the conventional view is that in a true university all faculty are productive researchers and publishers. Yet, as Ladd and Lipset discovered, 25 percent of the faculty in comprehensive colleges and universities have published nothing and 65 percent have published little or nothing.

The proposition that all faculty in four-year institutions are productive scholars is not only a policy espoused by administrators but one that is nurtured by faculty themselves. When a faculty member attends a national meeting of his professional society, conversations often suggest everyone is a researcher. This assumption is generally accepted by faculty in four-year colleges

and universities. Many faculty are frustrated by the fact that they accept the conventional view that all faculty are supposed to be scholars and publishers while they know they are not. They remain silent among peers who are discussing research underway or explain that they are carrying an exceptionally heavy workload.

This role conflict and one's perceptions of it seriously damage the teaching of many faculty. In an attempt to measure up to the institution's expectations for scholarship they spend untold amounts of time trying to generate papers that will be accepted for publication, and because some are not much interested in research and are not very good at it, they are torn by feelings of inadequacy and frustration. They suspect their research is not very good and fear that it will not be accepted for publication and often it is not. Consider how much better a teacher would be if so much time and emotional stress were not wasted on trivial research but were directed toward teaching and helping students, particularly if the faculty member were relieved of feelings of guilt and frustration concerning research and publications.

New Policy Needed

Ladd and Lipset's data showed conclusively that administrators and faculty who say that all faculty in their institutions are actively engaged in research and publication are deluding themselves.

Surely the evidence is sufficient to persuade institutional leaders that they should redefine roles in their institutions, face up to the fact that part of the faculty are not and never will be productive researchers and recognize it in institutional policies. The solution is not simple or else the problem would not be with us, however, it is essential that we explore alternative policies.

The Agriculture Model. In land-grant universities, faculty in colleges of agriculture distribute their time between teaching and research and, sometimes, the Agricultural Extension Service, however, the teaching-research combination is most common. Colleges of agriculture budget a portion of the faculty member's salary for teaching and for research. A department's budget for operating expenses (maintenance and operation) is also in two parts---one for teaching and one for research.

The faculty member must submit an annual research plan and a year-end report of research activities. There is no debate about whether one will conduct research and publish; the budget shows that research is part of the job and failure to do research and to publish means one is not doing the job. Further, before undertaking a research project, the faculty member must secure approval from the department chairman, the director of the agricultural experiment station and, sometimes, by a committee of peers. This helps to ensure that the project is worthy and the procedure shows promise of success.

A few college of agriculture faculty are appointed without budgetary assignments to research. They are free to seek external research funds and, indeed, later to qualify for college research funds but their initial appointment is for full-time teaching.

The land-grant agriculture model would seem to have promise for other disciplines, although with modifications. The department chairman, college dean and vice president for academic affairs, could, through negotiation, determine the number or percentage of faculty positions for which research time would be budgeted and the amount of time for each. If the institutional policy called for a twelve credit teaching load per semester or quarter for a full-time teacher, then a half-time research appointment would mean six credits of teaching and, like the agriculture faculty member, would include a contract budgetarily for research and publication.

The bookkeeping could be a departmental matter solely or one operating at the dean's level, or it could be built into the entire institutional budget. For non-public institutions with supportive boards, there is advantage in such division of teaching and research allocations of faculty time and operating budgets appearing in the total institutional budget. In tax-supported institutions, administrators have been reluctant to adopt this model for the entire institution lest, in periods of financial shortage, legislators would be tempted to eliminate all budgets specifying research or to eliminate funds for budgeted research in fields on which legislatures place less priority, e.g., the humanities, social sciences, education, social work and the like.

Variations on this model exist currently. When a faculty member receives external funding that supports part of his salary, the department's budget reflects that faculty member's time allocation for teaching and externally funded research.

Research institutes, some funded by the university and other depending on external funding, exist in many universities with faculty appointments and salaries divided between departments for teaching and the research institutes for research.

A typical departmental budget in most institutions lists each faculty member's salary under one accounting code which implies full-time teaching whereas, in fact, there is normally tacit understanding that part of the faculty member's time is to be allocated to research. The problem is that while the teaching responsibility is specific---number of courses, number of thesis advisees, and the like---the research responsibility is often vague, both to the faculty member and to his administrators. This lack of clarity contributes to the problem regarding faculty responsibility for research and publication.

An Experiment. The University of Texas of the Permian Basin, an upper level and graduate institution, opened in the 1970s with some twenty-five innovations or departures from the norm, one of which dealt with faculty research and publication.

Prior to the appointment of faculty, university administrators and planners visited twenty leading universities and interviewed dozens of administrators and faculty leaders, out of which developed a policy to allow each faculty member to choose for himself or herself whether to be evaluated on research and publication. Teaching loads of those who chose to be evaluated on research and publication (the research option) were reduced and when they were evaluated their research and publication were considered along with teaching and service activities.

When the university opened, the supply of Ph.D. trained faculty was ample in most disciplines and almost all of the faculty appointed held terminal degrees. If the university had opened a few years earlier this would not have been possible. Further, the absence of freshman and sophomore courses made it possible to recruit faculty whose interests differed from those in institutions with lower division.

Administrators had assumed that about half of the faculty would choose the research option, however, only about one-fourth did so. Why? Several faculty members explained that they were engaged in research and publication but preferred not to be required to do so. Later, it was found that several faculty members who had not chosen the research option had been as productive in publishing as those who had chosen it.

A survey was conducted four years after opening to determine the nature and extent of scholarly activity of faculty during the previous five-year period at the university (a few faculty had arrived one year before the university opened). The survey showed that more than half had published one or more journal articles, an average of 3.8 articles per faculty member; about one-

fourth had authored or co-authored books or contributed chapters to books; almost one-half had presented papers at professional or scholarly meetings, an average of 4.2 papers per faculty member.[7] In addition, performing arts faculty who did not publish had created or given artistic performances---music recitals, dance performances, art shows, theatrical presentations and others---that in those fields are usually considered comparable to scholarly activity. The least amount of publishing was among the business administration faculty, however, almost all of them were involved in consulting with business and industry. The next lowest was in education, most of whose faculty were consulting with school districts.

The university administration assessed the policy and concluded that it resulted in about as much scholarly activity as would have occurred with a publish or perish policy. Virtually all of the faculty, including most of the heavy publishers, supported the policy. It allowed those who did not choose the research option to concentrate on their teaching and to spend time with students without fear of penalty, which was reflected in high student ratings of teaching.

A qualification is in order. In planning the institution, a decision was made to recruit only faculty who had been trained in leading research universities. This was based on the belief that those who receive the Ph.D. degree from leading graduate schools are more likely to have better command of their disciplines. This did not ensure competent teaching but reduced the task of selecting faculty who would be competent in their fields, be effective teachers and were interested in students and their learning.

A second reason for this decision was the belief that individuals trained in leading research universities acquire during their graduate study positive attitudes toward and interest in research which will lead them to engage in research voluntarily. The best doctoral training programs, which generally are found in the leading research universities, expose graduate students to a unique ethos and inculcates in them a feeling about their disciplines and research that cannot easily be achieved

otherwise. This socialization into the discipline and the profession does not occur to the same degree in less research oriented institutions. It is quite possible that had faculty with a different orientation toward research and their disciplines been recruited, the policy might not have been as successful.

Codifying Practice. For some institutions, the solution may involve simply codifying current practice, recognizing officially what the institution is already doing. On an informal basis certain faculty members in some departments are acknowledged researchers and are given lighter teaching loads while others are acknowledged to be less interested in research and carry full-time teaching loads.

Some administrators and faculty argue that a formal policy that makes a distinction between faculty who are and who are not researchers would create a class distinction that is inimical to the well being of the institution, would create faculty conflicts and damage the reputation of the institution. It does not necessarily follow that a formal policy recognizing de facto practice would have these negative results; departmental faculty already know who are and who are not productive researchers. This simply codifies the existing situation and relieves those who do not publish of the guilt that some suffer because of the ambiguity of the situation.

Such a policy should not prevent faculty identified as non-researchers from later changing their roles to include research. Further, it does not mean that faculty with full-time teaching duties would not engage in scholarship. All faculty would be expected to continue to remain current in their disciplines, attend professional meetings and present papers and publish journal articles occasionally. Much of their scholarship would be based on research done by others, finding new meaning in their discoveries, synthesizing it and perhaps writing books based on research drawn broadly from the discipline.

Differentiation. To read written policies concerning faculty participation in research in most institutions today, one would conclude that expectations are the same for all disciplines and all faculty in them. In practice, this is not so. One of the obvious exceptions is in the performing arts; virtually all academicians agree that performing arts faculty in universities are expected to be creative in ways different from research as it is known in other disciplines.

There should be differentiation among disciplines, fields of study, types of institutions, institutional missions, among individuals by rank and, indeed, among individual personalities based on their unique talents.

Most faculty in the physical and biological sciences will do research whether required to do so or not---it is the nature of their disciplines. Faculty in the sciences who are not interested in research, however elementary, but who are outstanding teachers are rare.

On the other hand, this cannot be said for teachers of accounting. To be sure, there is need for research in accounting and a portion of faculty, especially in research universities, should be engaged in research but many faculty in accounting who are excellent teachers do not enjoy research. They make a different kind of contribution by consulting with businesses and bringing back to their teaching their consulting experience and, indeed, many of them present papers at professional accounting meetings and publish journal articles based on their consulting experience. This same principle applies to greater or lesser degree in other fields of business administration.

In engineering, a larger percentage are productive researchers but like business administration, engineering is a field of practice and some professors of engineering make greater contributions as good teachers and consultants t o industry than as researchers. A college of engineering, particularly one with a graduate program, in which a substantial number of faculty

were not productive researchers would not likely be very distinguished but, at the same time, it is highly likely that several valued faculty members would not be very productive researchers.

In the humanities and education a higher percentage of faculty do not fit the conventional researcher mold and often for good reason. A distinguished poet may not be interested in conventional research. The eloquent teacher of Milton may not be interested in research other than enhancing his own knowledge of his speciality, plus appearing on programs of national meetings of his field and writing an occasional journal article.

In colleges of education, faculty in educational psychology often have a greater bent for research than those who conduct teacher education programs, particularly faculty who are responsible for supervision of student teaching, for other field-based experience programs and for interacting with the public schools on behalf of the institution. Like accounting faculty, some of them can make greater contributions by bringing to the classroom their field studies which may not appear to be very scholarly to faculty in the sciences but which make significant contributions to educational practice.

The logic of differentiating among disciplines and among individuals in research expectations may be accepted by the administration and faculty leadership in a university but if they aspire to join the top twenty-five research universities in the country they recognize that they can afford few nonproductive researchers since the university's reputation is built on research and publication. Such an aspiration often creates problems of a different order in the applied disciplines. Schools of education with the most highly published faculty sometimes discover that they have lost touch and credibility with the public schools whom they purport to serve. Schools of business sometimes become so esoteric in their studies that their work is of little value to small businesses. Schools of engineering sometimes become so theoretical that their teaching differs

little from applied physics and law schools graduate students who are well schooled in the theory and philosophy of the law but "can't find the courthouse."

Universities that aspire to be among the top twenty-five research institutions in the country may find it difficult to acknowledge that not all of their faculty are productive researchers, but according to the Ladd-Lipset data, about 28 percent of the faculty in research universities are not very productive in research and publication. The Ladd-Lipset findings suggest that such institutions should make a thorough study of faculty research productivity and determine whether a policy change is needed.

Another kind of differentiation is among different types of institutions. Not only does such differentiation exist but it is often justified. The policy that applies to affluent private colleges and universities should not apply equally to small impecunious liberal arts colleges.

Nor should the same policy apply equally to a research state university and a comprehensive state college or university, i.e., primarily an undergraduate institution that awards masters' degrees. Few academicians would challenge these statements yet the distinction often does not exist in official policies. This is not to suggest that faculty in comprehensive colleges and universities should not engage in research but rather the percentage of faculty who are expected to be productive researchers is much lower, as Ladd reported, and official policy should recognize this.

In some less affluent liberal arts colleges, it would seem prudent to state as a matter of policy that research is not required of faculty, that it is encouraged and rewarded but the absence of research and publication will not penalize faculty if they are effective teachers, achieve high marks in service to the institution and as faculty members in other respects.

Analysis

The establishment of a policy recognizing that some faculty are productive researchers and some are not is not an easy task. To be sure, there is a multitude of details to be settled. For example, if a faculty member gains tenure but ceases to publish, is he or she dismissed or shifted to full-time teaching? Is the same level of competence as a teacher required of researchers and non-researchers up for tenure (it often is not)? Would public announcement of whether an individual is a researcher be made either externally or internally? And there are more, but these can be answered.

Why should universities do anything at all? Why not maintain the status quo? The first reason is honesty---bringing announced policy and actual practice together. A second reason is to relieve the frustrations of many faculty, especially in institutions other than research universities, to clarify their responsibilities both for their own peace of mind and to help institutional administrators to clarify expectations of individual faculty. Third, to clarify for the benefit of the public the mission of the institution and the responsibilities of faculty. Colleges and universities have been severely criticized by legislators, the press, trustees and other educated laymen for their professed policies on research and publication, often due to lack of clarity than to actual practice.

Finally, it will reduce the number of marginal papers submitted by faculty desperately seeking publication. It seems likely that scholarly activity, the totality of meritorious research and publication in the academy as a whole, would not suffer if institutions codify policies consistent with actual practice.

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Notes

1. The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, "The Faculty: Deeply Troubled," Change 17, 4 (September/October 1985), 31 -34.

2. Everett Carll Ladd, Jr., "The Work Experience of American College Professors: Some Data and an Argument," Current Issues in Higher Education: (2) Faculty Career Development (Washington: American Association for Higher Education, 1979), pp. 3-12.

3. Ibid.

4. Ibid., p. 5.

5. Ibid., p. 3.

6. Charles J. Anderson, 1981-82 Fact Book for Academic Administrators (Washington, DC: American Council on Education), p. 59.

7. Unpublished data from survey conducted in 1977 in connection with accreditation visit of a committee from the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools.